

## ENGLISH ABSTRACTS OF KEY ARTICLES

**Starting Points of the New Housing Policy Concept, by Daniela Grabmüllerová**

A new concept of the housing policy will be presented in 2004, based on both the previous housing developments in the Czech Republic and the foreign experience. The Housing Policy Department of the Ministry for Regional Development has struggled hard to investigate in the available statistical data on the economic conditions of housing and gain as profound information as possible about the housing market segments and the barriers to their development.

**Foreign Activities of the Ministry for Regional Development's Department of Planning and Building Administration, by Igor Hartmann**

The article gives a comprehensive outline of the programmes in which the Department of Planning and Building Administration is involved, such as the INTERREG III B & III C initiatives and the "network programmes" of ESPON and INTERACT. Also, the Department of Planning and Building Administration represents the Ministry in the Committee of high officers of the Council of Europe's conference of regional planning ministers (CEMAT) and the Central European Initiative (CEI). Furthermore, the Ministry takes part in the preparation of physical planning documents in the bordering areas of the country.

**New Public Procurement Act, by Igor Najman**

Public procurements make up almost 11 % of the gross national product of the Czech Republic. The legal process of the assessment of public procurements is often criticized as inconsequent and open to suspicious allocations of state budget finance, admitting uneconomic and inefficient solutions. The state is the largest assignor of public procurements, reaching annual amounts of dozens of milliards of crowns.

**Natura 2000: European Areas of Protected Nature in the Czech Republic, by Petr Lepeška**

On 1 May 2004 the Czech Republic entered the European Union, obliged to fulfil a number of requirements. One of them is the obligation to create and maintain a system of protected areas named *Natura 2000*. In view of the complexity of such task, the Czech Republic solicited a transition period to discharge but was not consented to. What shall we expect then?

**Results of a Questionnaire Survey on the Changes in the Housing Stock of Selected Towns and Cities, by Dana Chlupová, Marie Polešáková and Ludmila Rohrerová**

The problems of housing are becoming a more and more crucial issue in the society. At the level of municipalities, the privatization of municipal dwellings, going on at varied pace, is closely followed by both the authorities and those who live in the flats to privatize. Municipalities should consider elaborating their own housing concepts with the schemes of the continuation and termination of the process. "Monitoring of municipal housing", a permanent task of the Institute for Spatial Development, follows the alterations and changes within the municipal housing stock, gathering data for the housing policy concept of the Czech Republic.

**OPINIONS & DISCUSSIONS****Interview with the Chairman and the Secretary of the Czech Chamber of Architects, Jan Štípek and Jiří Plos**

In 2003, Mr Jan Štípek was reelected Chairman of the Czech Chamber of Architects. UPSD editors were curious about the Chamber's views of physical planning as one of the most important and complex subjects the Chamber is entrusted with. Also present was the Chamber's veteran secretary, Mr Jiří Plos. Apart from official statements, both gentlemen have been expressing their own opinions. Important to say, such comments were regarding many more issues than just the physical planning legislation. Remarkably, the interview had been led before the last modifications to the draft of the Building Act were done, but some of the ideas were then realized in the Act.

**Experience of a Canadian Architect; the project of urban braille, or the toilsome life of Canadian planners, by Vladimír Matuš**

Mr Matuš is a Canadian architect of Czech ancestors. Thanks to the contacts of the architects Stanislav Toman and Eva Rozehnalová we could obtain a letter from him, describing the Canadian architects' practice as rather different form that the Czechs are familiar with. Considering such information attractive to our readers, with the writer's kind permission we present the letter to our readers.